

# **Program Guidelines for Students Who Are Visually Impaired**

**1997 Revised Edition**

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## Publishing Information

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## Legal Requirements for Publishing

These guidelines have been developed pursuant to *Education Code* Section 56136, which requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to:

... develop guidelines for each low-incidence disability area and provide technical assistance to parents, teachers, and administrators regarding the implementation of the guidelines. The guidelines shall clarify the identification, assessment, planning of, and the provision of specialized services to pupils with low-incidence disabilities pursuant to Section 56825. The adopted guidelines shall be promulgated for the purpose of establishing recommended guidelines and shall not operate to impose minimum state requirements.

Program guidelines, according to *Education Code* Section 33308.5, "shall be designed to serve as a model or example and shall not be prescriptive." These guidelines have been developed cooperatively by teachers, parents, and administrators to serve as a model for providing a quality, cost-effective education to visually impaired students that includes the requirements of state and federal laws. Pertinent legal requirements are located in Appendix F.



Prepared for printing  
by CSEA members

# Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Preface .....	vii
Acknowledgments .....	ix
 <b>Chapter One—Introduction</b>	
Purpose of the Guidelines .....	1
Scope of the Guidelines .....	1
Use of the Guidelines .....	2
Standards for Meeting Unique Educational Needs .....	2
Standards in Chapter Three .....	2
Standards in Chapter Four .....	3
Standards in Chapter Five .....	3
Content of the Appendixes .....	4
 <b>Chapter Two—Unique Educational Needs Related to a Visual Impairment</b>	
Concept Development and Academic Needs .....	6
Communication Needs .....	7
Social/Emotional Needs .....	7
Socialization .....	7
Affective Education .....	8
Recreation .....	8
Sex Education .....	9
Psychological Implications .....	9
Sensory/Motor Needs .....	9
Orientation and Mobility Needs .....	10
Daily Living Skills Needs .....	12
Career/Vocational Needs .....	13
 <b>Chapter Three—Identifying and Assessing Unique Educational Needs</b>	
Eligibility for Special Education .....	14
Identification of Students with Visual Impairments .....	15
Assessment of Visually Impaired Students .....	15
Reports on Vision .....	15
Low Vision .....	15
Communication Skills and Primary Reading and Learning Media .....	17
Concept Development and Academic Skills .....	18

	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
Social/Emotional Skills.....	18	Exploration .....	29
Sensory/Motor Skills .....	18	Preparation.....	29
Orientation and Mobility Skills .....	18	Participation.....	29
Daily Living Skills .....	19	Specialized Books, Materials, and Equipment .....	29
Career/Vocational Skills.....	19	Roles and Responsibilities of Key Individuals .....	30
Assessment Personnel .....	19	Teacher of the Visually Impaired .....	30
Assessment Report .....	20	Classroom Teacher .....	32
Variables Affecting Educational Needs .....	20	Orientation and Mobility Specialist .....	32
Congenital or Adventitious Visual		Parent, Guardian, or Conservator .....	33
Impairments .....	20	The Student Who Is Visually Impaired.....	34
Visually Impaired Students with Multiple		Eye Specialist.....	34
Disabilities .....	20	Regular or Adapted Physical Education	
Infants and Preschool Children .....	22	Specialist .....	34
Elementary School and Secondary School		Occupational or Physical Therapist .....	34
Students .....	22	School Nurse .....	34
Nature of the Student's Visual Impairment.....	23	Program Specialist .....	35
Students Who Are Functionally Blind or		Early Childhood Specialist .....	35
Have Low Vision .....	23	Specialist in Career/Vocational Education .....	35
Students with Other Special Needs .....	23	Language, Speech, and Hearing Specialist .....	36
		Technology Specialist .....	36
<b>Chapter Four—Planning and Providing</b>		Counselor, Psychologist, or Social Worker.....	36
<b>Instruction and Services</b>		Certified Braille Specialist (Transcriber) .....	36
Unique Educational Needs .....	24	Reader .....	37
Concept Development and Academic Needs ....	24	Aide/Paraprofessional/Instructional	
Concept Development .....	25	Assistant .....	37
Listening Skills .....	25	Ancillary Staff in Residential Programs .....	37
Study Skills .....	25	Coordination of Instruction and Services .....	37
Communication Instruction .....	25		
Social/Emotional Instruction .....	26	<b>Chapter Five—Organizing and Supporting</b>	
Socialization .....	26	<b>Instruction and Services</b>	
Affective Education .....	26	Regionalization .....	39
Recreation .....	26	Administrative Roles and Responsibilities .....	40
Sex Education .....	26	Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) ...	40
Psychological Implications .....	27	Supervisor of Personnel .....	40
Sensory/Motor Instruction .....	27	Site Administrator or Designee .....	41
Orientation and Mobility Instruction .....	27	Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment ..	41
Instruction in Daily Living Skills .....	28	Program Options .....	42
Career and Vocational Instruction .....	28	Itinerant Teacher of the Visually Impaired ...	42
Awareness .....	28		

	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
Resource Room for Students Who Are Visually Impaired .....	42	Considerations in Prescribing Low Vision Aids .....	62
Special Classroom for Students Who Are Visually Impaired .....	42	Supplementary Low Vision Services and Needs .....	62
Special School for Students Who Are Visually Impaired .....	42	Registration of Visually Handicapped Students .....	63
Nonpublic Schools and Agencies .....	42	Eye Report for Children with Visual Problems .....	64
Program Options for Infants and Preschool Children .....	42	Preferred Visual Acuity Notations .....	65
Class Sizes and Caseloads .....	43	Educationally Oriented Vision Report .....	66
Qualified Personnel .....	44	Functional Vision Assessment Checklist Summary .....	68
Certificated Personnel .....	44	C. Determining the Appropriate Reading Medium .....	71
Noncertificated Personnel .....	44	Guidelines to Determine the Appropriate Reading Medium .....	71
Staff Development and Parent Education .....	45	Factors to Consider in Determining the Reading Medium .....	72
Guidelines for Facilities .....	45	Vision-Related Factors .....	72
Emergency Procedures .....	46	Learning-Related Factors .....	73
Materials and Equipment .....	46	Social/Emotional-Related Factors .....	73
Transportation .....	47	Determining the Appropriate Reading Medium: The Preschool Child .....	73
Program Improvement .....	47	Selected References .....	74
<b>Appendixes</b>		Checklist for Determining the Appropriate Reading Medium .....	75
A. Self-Review Guide .....	48	D. California School for the Blind .....	77
B. Assessing Vision/Low Vision .....	58	Purpose of the Program .....	77
Visual Impairments .....	58	Guidelines for Enrollment .....	77
Functional Vision Assessment .....	59	Referral Process .....	77
Functional Vision Assessment of Preschool Children .....	60	Criteria for Referral .....	78
Assessment by a Qualified Eye Specialist .....	61	Residential Policy .....	78
Detailed Case History .....	61	Assessment Program .....	78
Visual Acuity Measurements .....	61	E. Specialized Books, Materials, and Equipment .....	79
External Examination .....	61	Funding for Specialized Books, Materials, and Equipment .....	79
Evaluation of Extraocular Motility .....	61	Sources of Specialized Books, Materials, and Equipment .....	80
Pupillary Reflexes .....	61		
Color and Stereopsis Testing .....	61		
Keratometry .....	62		
Retinoscopy .....	62		
Subjective Testing .....	62		
Objective Testing .....	62		

	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
Clearinghouse for Specialized Media and Technology .....	80	Individualized Education Program .....	85
State-Adopted Elementary School Textbooks .....	80	Appropriate Reading Media or Medium, Including Braille .....	85
Computer Searches .....	80	Definitions .....	86
Blind Teachers Readers Fund .....	80	Braille Instruction .....	86
Key Agencies for Specialized Materials .....	80	Determining the Appropriate Reading Medium or Media .....	86
Key Agencies for Technology .....	81	Designated Instruction and Services .....	86
Alliance for Technology Access Resource Centers .....	81	Integrated Special Classes/Instruction .....	87
The California Technology Assistance Project .....	81	Funding Specialized Books, Materials, and Equipment .....	87
Community College High Tech Centers for the Disabled .....	81	Low Incidence Funding .....	87
American Printing House for the Blind Federal Quota Program .....	81	Special Supplies and Equipment .....	87
F. Legal Requirements (As of January, 1997) .....	82	G. Resources for Technical Assistance .....	88
Eligibility Criteria for the Visually Impaired .....	82	California Department of Education .....	88
Vision Services .....	82	Additional Resources .....	89
Low Incidence Disabilities Definitions .....	83	H. The Early Start Program .....	91
Qualified Staff .....	83	Early Start Intervention Services .....	92
Special Education Program Options .....	83	Individualized Family Service Plans .....	92
Guidelines, Technical Assistance, and Monitoring .....	83	The Role of the IFSP .....	92
Directories of Public and Private Agencies .....	83	Basic Elements of Part H of IDEA and California's Early Start Program .....	92
Compliance Assurances/Description and Services .....	83	Assessment .....	93
Local Plan Agreements .....	84	Eligibility .....	93
Staff Development .....	84	Review of the Individualized Family Service Plan .....	93
Identification and Referral .....	84	Preschool Children .....	93
Assessment/Low Vision Assessment .....	85	Key Points for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers .....	93
Persons Conducting the Assessment .....	85	Concept Development .....	93
Assessment Report .....	85	Sensory/Motor Development .....	94
Visual Perceptual/Visual Motor Dysfunction .....	85	Adaptive Development .....	94
		Communication Skills Development .....	94
		Social/Emotional Development .....	94
		Low Vision .....	95
		Glossary .....	96

# Preface

A major responsibility of the Department of Education is to provide leadership and assistance to administrators, parents, and staff in their efforts to improve educational programs for all students, including students with visual impairments. These guidelines have been developed by the Special Education Division of the Department to assist administrators, staff, and parents in improving the identification and assessment of students with visual impairments and the planning and provision of instruction and services to these students. The guidelines will be a valuable tool in reform efforts at the local and state levels, including challenge schools, and in the development of a new statewide service delivery and funding model for special education.

Public education for students with visual impairments in California has developed during more than 100 years, beginning with the establishment in 1860 of the California School for the Blind in San Francisco. The first public school program for students with visual impairments was established in 1917; and the integration of students into regular school programs began in 1924, with the establishment of resource rooms for students with visual impairments in elementary and secondary schools. Historically, California has been recognized as a leader in the education of students with visual impairments through the innovative efforts of parents, staff, and administrators. These guidelines were adapted and published in 1989 by the American Foundation for the Blind as *Program Planning and Evaluation for Blind and Visually Impaired Students: National Guidelines for Educational Excellence* and are used extensively throughout the United States and in countries around the world. We believe that this document will assist those who are continuing the efforts to meet federal and state legal requirements and to realize the dream of Helen Keller “that every blind child have an opportunity to receive a quality education.”

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Appreciation is extended for the contributions, advice, and assistance provided by the many individuals, agencies, and organizations to assist the Department in revising these guidelines and to Jack Hazekamp, Special Education Consultant, California Department of Education, who coordinated their development.

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# Acknowledgments

The original guidelines, published in 1986, were developed with the assistance of an advisory committee representing a broad spectrum of individuals, organizations, and public and private agencies involved in the education of students with visual impairments in California. This committee provided an important link to the latest developments in this field and to the development of a document responsive to the needs of parents, teachers, and administrators.

This edition of the guidelines also reflects the work and recommendations of many administrators, teachers, parents, and other interested individuals who provided contributions separately in writing or during workshops held at the California School for the Blind, Fremont, and the California School for the Deaf, Riverside, in 1994; during eight regional meetings held throughout the state in 1995; and at the annual conference of the California Transcribers and Educators of the Visually Handicapped in 1996.

The efforts of the following persons were invaluable in addressing the revisions of the guidelines developed in response to AB 2445 (Conroy), Chapter 988, statutes of 1994, known as the “Braille Bill,” as well as in revising many other sections of the guidelines:<sup>1</sup>

Linda Clarke, Teacher of the Visually Impaired,  
Los Angeles County Office of Education

Jamie Dote-Kwan, Associate Professor,  
Division of Special Education, California State  
University, Los Angeles

Cheryl Sjostrom, Coordinator,  
San Bernardino City Unified School District

Jane Vogel, Vision Specialist,  
West Orange County Consortium for Special Educa-  
tion

The following persons provided major contributions in the preparation of sections of the guidelines addressing transition:

Anna Lee Braunstein, Teacher of the Visually Impaired,  
San Juan Unified School District

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<sup>1</sup>The titles of the persons listed in this section were current when this publication was prepared.

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Pat Dougan, Special Education Consultant,  
California Department of Education  
Jan Jones Wadsworth, Career Vocational Specialist for  
the Visually Impaired, Azusa Unified School District

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